



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 318

February Session, 2008

Substitute House Bill No. 5786

House of Representatives, March 31, 2008

The Committee on Energy and Technology reported through REP. FONTANA, S. of the 87th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING LOW-INCOME HEATING ASSISTANCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (d) of section 16a-41a of the 2008 supplement
2 to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in
3 lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2008*):

4 (d) [If funding allows, the Commissioner of Social Services, in
5 consultation with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and
6 Management, shall require that, each] Each community action agency
7 administering a fuel assistance program shall begin accepting
8 applications for the program not later than September first of each
9 year.

10 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) The Department of Social
11 Services shall develop a plan for providing funds for weatherization
12 projects for low-income households participating in the Connecticut
13 energy assistance program, prioritizing assistance to households with
14 incomes below two hundred per cent of the federal poverty level and

15 coordinating provision of assistance to maximize effectiveness of the
 16 funds with the weatherization assistance provided to low-income
 17 households administered by the municipal electric utility and public
 18 service utility companies in programs overseen by the Energy
 19 Conservation Management Board pursuant to sections 16-245m, 16-32f
 20 and 7-233y of the general statutes and the Fuel Oil Conservation Board
 21 pursuant to section 16a-22l of the 2008 supplement to the general
 22 statutes. No later than August 1, 2008, and at least forty-five days
 23 before implementation, the department shall submit said plan for
 24 expenditure of these funds to the Connecticut Energy Advisory Board,
 25 the Fuel Oil Conservation Board and the Energy Conservation
 26 Management Board for input and advice. The Energy Conservation
 27 Management Board may order modification of the plan to ensure
 28 effective prioritization and coordination of weatherization assistance in
 29 accordance with this section.

30 Sec. 3. (*Effective July 1, 2008*) The sum of five million seven hundred
 31 thousand dollars is appropriated to the Department of Social Services,
 32 from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, for
 33 funds for weatherization projects for low-income households
 34 participating in the Connecticut energy assistance program pursuant
 35 to section 2 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	16a-41a(d)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In section 2 "electric utility" was inserted after "municipal" for statutory consistency.

ET *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 09 \$	FY 10 \$
Department of Social Services	GF - Cost	5,350,000	350,000

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

This bill requires community action agencies to begin receiving applications for fuel assistance programs by September 1st each year. Currently, the Department of Social Services (DSS) may require the agencies to do this if funding allows. It is expected that early intake for the fuel assistance programs will result in additional administrative costs of \$350,000 annually. sHB 5021 (the budget bill, as reported by the Appropriations Committee) contains \$350,000 for DSS to implement early intake. It is anticipated that the early enrollment will alleviate processing backlogs that have occurred in the program. It is not anticipated to result in additional benefit costs.

Section 2 of the bill further requires DSS to develop a plan for providing funds for weatherization projects for low income households. It is anticipated that DSS can develop this plan within normal administrative resources.

Section 3 of the bill appropriates \$5 million to DSS for low income weatherization projects. It should be noted that sHB 5021 contains \$1.9 million for DSS for low income weatherization projects.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5786*****AN ACT CONCERNING LOW-INCOME HEATING ASSISTANCE.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to develop a plan for funding weatherization projects for low-income households participating in the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP). It appropriates \$5.7 million to DSS in FY 09 for these projects.

Under current law, DSS, in consultation with the Office of Policy and Management secretary, must order community action agencies administering fuel assistance programs to begin accepting applications by September 1 annually, if funding allows. The bill instead requires the agencies to do so, regardless of funding, without being directed by DSS.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2008

WEATHERIZATION PROJECTS

The bill requires the DSS plan to give priority to (1) helping households with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level and (2) coordinating the projects funded by the bill with existing weatherization programs. These programs are the utility-administered programs overseen by the Energy Conservation Management Board and the oil conservation programs administered by the Fuel Oil Conservation Board.

The bill requires DSS to submit its plan to these two boards and the Connecticut Energy Advisory Board for their input and advice. DSS must do so by August 1, 2008 and at least 45 days before the plan's implementation. The Energy Conservation Management Board may order modification of the plan to ensure effective prioritization and

coordination of weatherization assistance.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 22 Nay 0 (03/11/2008)